

**BOARD OF NURSING REPORT
TO THE ALL IDAHO NURSE EDUCATOR CONFERENCE
September 16, 2004
College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, Idaho**

On behalf of the staff and members of the Board of Nursing, thank you for the invitation to update you on activities of the Board during the past year. The Board continues to focus its attention on issues and activities related to licensure, education, practice and discipline as directed by the Board's Mission to "safeguard the public health, safety and welfare".

The 9-member Board of Nursing includes 1 advanced practice professional nurse, 5 licensed professional and 2 licensed practical nurses, and 1 consumer. Current members of the Board include advanced practice professional nurse, Randy Hudspeth, NP from Boise, who was recently elected Board chair; RNs Dan Bauer from Boise, Karen Ellis from Pocatello, Jill Howell from Jerome, who is serving as Board vice chair, Shirlee Meyer from Meridian; and Susan Odom from Moscow. LPN members include Ridon Clemm from Idaho Falls and Analyn Frasure from Pocatello. Sheri Florence from Boise is the consumer member of the Board. Members are appointed by the Governor to serve 4-year terms and are eligible for reappointment to serve up to three consecutive terms.

Next April 1, three Board member terms of appointment will expire: that of the consumer member and those of two RN members, one educated at the associate degree or diploma level and one educated with a baccalaureate or higher degree. Persons interested in appointment to the Board are encouraged to contact Governor Kempthorne's office for direction on submitting their names for consideration. The Board meets quarterly in Boise for 2-3 day meetings during which they consider requests for licensure; serve as the hearing panel for disciplinary cases; address issues related to practice and education presented to them by the public; and address policy issues related to their mission and strategic goals.

The Board of Nursing serves as the primary source for workforce data related to the licensure, practice and education of nurses in Idaho, as reported in their Annual Statistical Report to the Governor. Board records indicate that for the period ending December 31, 2003, there were 16,622 nurses licensed in Idaho, including 3,776 LPNs, 12,846 RNs and 724 APPNs. Of these, 2,723 LPNs and 10,534 RNs indicated they are licensed and practicing nursing in Idaho. These figures reflect a 7% increase in total number of LPNs licensed in the state and a decrease of 1% in numbers of RNs and a decrease of 2% in numbers of APPNs over figures reported for the previous year. Records further indicate that of the nurses licensed and practicing in Idaho, 40% of RNs and 42% of LPNs are over the age of 50.

During 2003, the Board investigated 78 complaints alleging violations of the Nursing Practice Act and Rules of the Board, a 6% decrease in the number of complaints from the previous year. Consistent with trends over the past ten years, the highest number of

complaints relate to chemical impairment with the second highest number alleging grossly negligent or incompetent nursing practice.

Data collected during licensure renewal for purposes of statistical reporting and nurse demographic research was modified during the 2003 renewal cycle, allowing the Board to begin reporting information not previously available, including gender and ethnicity information, as well as whether or not unemployed nurses are actively seeking employment, where and in what positions nurses work, whether or not they are seeking additional or advanced degrees in nursing, and whether or not they plan to leave nursing practice within the next five year period.

The National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN/PN), owned and administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, is the examination required by the United States and its territories for initial licensure as an RN or LPN. Pearson VUE, an international corporation with offices located in Minneapolis, MN, administers the examination in over 200 testing centers throughout the United States. During 2003, 344 professional nursing graduates from Idaho schools wrote the NCLEX-RN for initial licensure. Of that number, 92.1% successfully wrote the examination on the first attempt, exceeding the national pass rate for first time writers by 5%. During that same period, 173 practical nursing graduates from Idaho programs wrote the NCLEX-PN for initial licensure in Idaho. Of this number, 92.5% successfully wrote on the first attempt, exceeding the national pass rate by 4%.

Based on information provided in annual reports to the Board, results of on-site surveys and annual success rates of program graduates on the NCLEX, continuing full approval was granted to professional nursing education programs at Boise State University, Brigham Young University-Idaho, the College of Southern Idaho, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clarke State College, North Idaho College and Northwest Nazarene University; and to practical nursing education programs at Boise State University, the College of Southern Idaho, Eastern Idaho Technical College, Idaho State University and North Idaho College. In addition, Lewis-Clark State College admitted the first class of students to their practical nursing program, which is provisionally approved pending graduation of the first class. At their meeting this past August, the Board granted initial approval to Idaho State University to proceed with planning for implementation of an Associate of Science degree in professional nursing program to be delivered primarily to Idaho's southeastern counties.

2003 records indicate a 4% decrease in the numbers of interested applicants to Idaho's professional nursing education programs over the previous year's figures. Records further indicate a 4% increase in the number admitted and a slight decline in total number of graduates.

For the same reporting period, there was a 17% increase in the number of applicants interested in LPN education and a 13% decrease in the number of PN students admitted. In 2003, PN graduations increased by 45%.

During the past year, the Board has continued to focus attention and resources on priority goals and objectives reflected in their 5-year strategic plan. In FY2004 the Board:

- Amended the Idaho Nursing Practice Act to require criminal background checks as a condition of initial and reinstatement licensure beginning July 1, 2005
- Implemented on-line licensure renewal for LPNs consistent with the process used for RNs a year ago
- Implemented revised administrative rules related to RN and LPN practice
- Developed standards and criteria for components of the Board's Program for Recovering Nurses, including criteria for managing relapse, for professional support groups, for drug screening and for return to nursing practice
- Participated in national research initiatives to determine Board effectiveness in mission accomplishment and analysis of nursing practice errors
- Actively participated as a party state to the Nurse Licensure Compact, joining the other 17 member states in recognizing multi-state licenses; and
- Maintained the Board's contract for monitoring nurses whose practice is or may be impaired by mental or emotional illness and/or chemical addiction (During 2003, 75 nurses participated in the Program for Recovering Nurses, including 3 APPNs, 55 RNs and 17 LPNs)

Priority strategic objectives being addressed by the Board in FY2005 include

- Implementation of the requirement for criminal background checks, including promulgation of related rules and development of internal policies and procedures
- Promulgation of revised rules necessary to implement provisions of HB659, which removed requirements for physician supervision, consultation, collaboration and referral as conditions of advanced practice; and to require demonstrated peer review processes as a condition of APPN license renewal
- Enhancement of Board communications, including website design, newsletters, reports and presentations and
- Complete revision of the Board's strategic plan for the period beginning July 1, 2005

In addition, the Board will be reviewing for possible revision, administrative rules defining criteria for nursing education programs preparing LPNs, RNs and APPNs for licensure and practice. Of particular interest are regulatory trends related to approval of programs in states other than Idaho, programs delivered by distance methodology, virtual clinical experiences, and the relationship of Board of Nursing approval to national accreditation.

Key issues being addressed by the Board include clarification of the Board's role in responding to the current and on-going critical nurse shortage; the evolving and blurring of practice roles of LPNs and RNs, as well as the changing role of nursing assistants; assessment of the Board's effectiveness in accomplishing its Mission; and the changing picture of disciplinary cases presented to the Board.

This past April 1, the passing standard for the NCLEX-RN was raised in response to changes in U.S. health care delivery and nursing practice that have resulted in the increased acuity of clients seen by entry-level RNs. The last time the NCLEX-RN passing standard was raised was in 1998.

At their recent annual meeting, delegates of National Council adopted enhancements to the NCLEX-PN Test Plan, changes that do not affect the examination itself, but instead serve to clarify content of the exam. In addition, NCSBN has introduced alternate format

items to the RN examination with plans to continue to analyze the effectiveness of these items in assessing higher-level cognitive processes. In addition, NC plans expand of testing time for RN candidates by an additional hour in the near future.

The National Council has completed its triennial entry-level practice analysis of LPNs and is progressing with other major research projects involving exploration of the value of continuing education mandates, identification of characteristics of post-entry practice over time, analysis of factors that place nurses at higher risk for practice-related errors, and a look at the regulatory effectiveness of chemical impairment alternative programs. Of particular news is the announcement that beginning January 1, 2005, the NCLEX will be administered internationally for purposes of domestic licensure. Selected as the initial international testing sites are London, England, Seoul, South Korea and Hong Kong.

As always, the Board welcomes your input as well as that of students during the open forum scheduled during each quarterly Board meeting, through written and electronic correspondence to the Board and by requests for formal meetings with the Board. The Board is eager to learn of your interests and concerns, in order that we can include these issues in our strategic planning discussions.

Best wishes for a successful meeting.